

# Wilderness Characteristics

## In

### Resource Management Plans



# FLPMA, Section 603 Wilderness Review

- Inventory - Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)
- Study - Legislative EISs
- Report - Wilderness Study Reports



# Wilderness Characteristics

## Wilderness Act 1964, Sec. 2 (c)

### Definitions of Wilderness

- Natural conditions
- Outstanding opportunity for solitude
- Outstanding opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation
- Sufficient Size
- May contain other values

### Section 603 of FLPMA

- Required BLM to use these wilderness characteristics during its Sec. 201 inventories, as described in the 1964 Wilderness Act



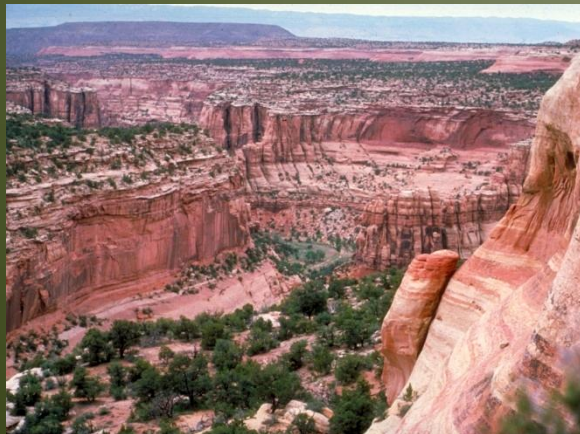
# New Inventories

- Post FLPMA acquisitions, changing conditions, public interest = new wilderness inventories.
- We used to identify new WSAs
- Utah re-inventory 1996- 1999
  - 2.6 mm acres identified as having wilderness characteristics
  - 0.5 mm do not have wilderness characteristics

# Utah

## Utah Re-Inventory

- Legal proceedings challenging the BLM's re-inventory concluded in April, 2003 with the "Utah Settlement"



## Utah Settlement

- Changed the way we had been conducting Section 201 wilderness inventories and Section 202 wilderness studies



# The Settlement

- BLM's Section 603 authority to conduct wilderness reviews expired in 1993
- No new WSAs after April, 2003
- Section 201 Inventory of public lands for wilderness characteristics is OK
- Lands with wilderness characteristics can be considered in RMPs for possible protection (Section 202)
- Do not have to protect
- No IMP for newly identified wilderness characteristics

# Implementing the Settlement

- Instruction Memoranda issued
- Applied Bureau-wide by these Instruction Memoranda (except AK)
- Rescinded H-6310-1
- Instructions expired in September, 2004



# Present Situation

- No WO written guidance issued to replace expired guidance
- All state offices have expressed desire to have new instructions issued on how to conduct an inventory for wilderness characteristics, and how to consider wilderness characteristics in land use plans
- Utah RMPs

# Oregon

- A series of suits from 2006-2008 focused on wilderness inventory outside of WSAs
- 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit, July 2008
  - Southeast Oregon RMP vacated
  - BLM must consider if wilderness values are now present outside of existing WSAs
  - How should the plan treat such values if present?

# Public Wilderness Inventory

- BLM's original baseline wilderness inventory process ended in 1980. Some inventory findings were protested and appealed
- The inventories that determined that lands outside of WSAs do not have wilderness characteristics are now 29 years old
- Citizens are now providing BLM with new wilderness inventory information

# Do you have lands with wilderness characteristics outside of WSAs?

- Is your wilderness inventory current?
- Update your original wilderness inventory
- Are your 1980 findings still valid, or have things changed?
- Consider new information supplied by the public or by your own office
- Update your inventory, don't re-inventory

# Update your Inventory prior to the RMP

- What do your records say?
- Do you have information from the Public?
- What are the current conditions on the ground?
- Use the established definitions of wilderness characteristics developed for the 603 process

# Update Your Wilderness Inventory

- Consult maps (GIS and aerial photography)
- Review information submitted by the public
- Ground truth as necessary
- Review of public inventory input and rationale
- Document your findings



# Wilderness Characteristics

## Must Have:

- Roadless Area of Sufficient Size
- Natural character
- Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude *or* Primitive and Unconfined Recreation
- May have “supplemental values”
- Combination of wilderness characteristics
- The wilderness resource

# The Planning Manual H-1601-1

- ***Land Use Plan Decisions.*** Identify decisions to protect or preserve wilderness characteristics...
- Include goals and objectives to protect the resource and management actions necessary to achieve these goals and objectives...
- For authorized activities, include conditions of use that would avoid or minimize impacts to wilderness characteristics...
- ***Implementation Decisions.*** Identify site-specific protection measures to insure protection of wilderness characteristics

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K. Wilderness Characteristics

# No Wilderness Characteristics?

- When the wilderness resource is absent, don't analyze
- An issue considered but not analyzed
- Single characteristics may be associated with other resources analyzed

# Consider Wilderness characteristics when they exist

- Affected Environment
- Description of Alternatives
- Environmental Consequences
- Record of Decision



# Alternatives

- One that protects all identified wilderness characteristics
- One that does not
- Combinations
- Decision could protect all, some, or none of the characteristics



# What do we look for In WO 171?

- Did you update your wilderness inventory?
- Were wilderness characteristics identified as an issue?
- Are wilderness characteristics present, as verified by inventory documentation?
- When present, are they clearly identified on maps and in analysis?

# Questions???



























***Las Cruces , AZ***



































